

OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR- BRIAN SCHWEITZER  
GOVERNOR'S ADVISORY COUNCIL  
ON ECONOMIC SECURITY FOR MONTANA FAMILIES

Mountain West Bank  
Helena, Montana  
Tuesday, December 4, 2007

MINUTES-(Approved 5-14-08)

Council Members Present:

Minkie Medora, Chairperson  
Representative Shannon Augare  
Mary Danford  
Sheila Hogan  
Barb Stiffarm  
Elaine Topsky  
Angie Wasia

Council Members Absent:

Lori Brengle  
Everall Fox  
Bethany Letiecq  
Robert Young

Council Designees and Attendees:

Bruce Brensdal-Commerce	Mary Berg
Gail Gallik -Commerce	Julia Brown
Hank Hudson -DPHHS	Bob Buzzas
Jim Nolan-DPHHS	Pamela Carlson
Kane Quenemoen-DPHHS	Jasyn Harrington
Dore Schwinden-Labor & Industry	Representative Deb Kottel
Barb Wagner-Revenue	Linda Moodry
Anne Pichette-Governor's Office	Lisa Newman
Anna Whiting Sorrell-Governor's Office	Barb Perzinski
Robert Hamud-OBPP	
TJ Eyer-Office of Public Instruction	

\*Beki Glyde Brandborg-Facilitator

Call to Order/Welcome

The meeting began with introductions of council members and attendees. The meeting facilitator, Beki Glyde Brandborg, was introduced and the meeting process discussed. (Attachment A-facilitator notes)

The November 7<sup>th</sup> & 8<sup>th</sup> meeting minutes were approved.

### Council Information

A short review of the Council's work and previous discussions was provided.

### Group Discussion

Council members spent most of the meeting discussing the 7 subject areas for draft recommendations and discussing any changes to the drafts from the working groups. Julia, Deb, and Shannon volunteered to compile the comments and adjustments into 'draft 2' of the working document. Council members will email her with any additional information (including attachments they would like to have with their papers) and she will send out an updated version of the draft recommendations.

The Council discussed their drafts with Anna and talked about the full list of ideas from which the 7 draft recommendations were produced. She talked about moving forward, building partnerships, looking at successful models and what is being done in communities.

Council members also had a discussion about the future of the council and other duties and tasks associated with the Council. They discussed an economic security score-card and public education about the subject. They mentioned holding one of the upcoming meetings in another community to see the programs and public/private partnerships that are occurring around the state. They also talked about work being done by other councils, groups, service providers, state agencies, and what is being done locally in communities.

### Follow-up

The Council will provide to Julia any additional information for the draft recommendations and the updated document will be sent to Council members for review and comments so that an updated version can be prepared for the next meeting in February.

### Public Comment

Bob Buzzas of the MT HRDC Association talked about apprenticeships and the HRDC initiative that looked at what was missing in work-the need for a summer youth employment program. He discussed the partnerships that can be formed to create it.

Barb Perzinski talked about the block grant funds for youth program, youth workforce development, skills enhancement and the idea of looking past lines and ways to use old funding in new ways. She also mentioned concentrating on people getting diplomas and GED and the difficulties with Federal rules that don't allow for some opportunities to be counted toward required hours.

### Next Meeting

The next meeting will be held in Helena, possibly in February. As soon as a location and date has been determined the council will be notified and the information posted on the statewide e-Calendar.

**Governor's Advisory Council on Economic Security for Montana Families  
December 4, 2007  
Meeting notes**

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**The Council's mission / purpose statement**

(Why we exist, what we are here to do, what makes us unique from any other organization)

The Governor's Advisory Council on Economic Security for Montana Families mission is to:

- a.) Formulate strategies for achieving economic security for Montanans;
- b.) Coordinate and improve public programs (and increase access to them);
- c.) Create public-private partnerships to benefit low income families; and
- d.) Address barriers to economic security through increased resources and public education.

**The Council's vision statement:** (What we hope to achieve, the outcomes and results we seek:)

We envision a Montana where each family has the resources needed to achieve economic security.

## 1. The Council's seven recommendations

Shannon and Deb volunteered to edit our recommendations based on today's input. Changes and additions are indicated below for each recommendation for them to incorporate.

The outline we decided in November to use for our recommendations is:

- a. One sentence statement naming our recommendation.
- b. A three sentence statement outlining our recommendation in a bit more detail.
- c. A description of the rationale, need, importance and value of the recommendation.
- d. Describe the success and desired outcomes we envision. (Bulleted points)
- e. Suggestions for how the recommendation could be implemented, the changes we hope to occur. (Bulleted points)

### a. Our draft recommendations

#### I. Create Individual Development Accounts

##### Recommendation:

- Number the recommendations, versus using bullets.
- To the first one, add: Assess existing IDAs, disseminate what has worked and been effective.
- To the second one, change the word “families” to “households.”
- To the ninth one, add: Develop guidelines. Address: Should we limit it to homes, computers, cars, micro-businesses, be specific or be flexible? What about medical debt?
- To the tenth one, regarding “... increasing protections for the assets,” clarify it and be specific. Some of the language is so broad that it might scare some people. Improve the language.
- Add an eleventh one: Charter outside government a clearinghouse of IDAs to encourage a consolidated application.

##### Success and desired outcomes we envision:

- Add the concept: Move the existing programs statewide. Replicate the success of Assets for Independence to all Montana families. Look at both state and foundations for support.

#### II. Expand and create new apprenticeship and training opportunities that lead to economic security and prosperity for minorities, women, and at-risk youth.

##### A description of the rationale, need, importance, and value of the recommendation:

- Regarding Need II, add something about the need for access and acceptance to regionally available programs.
- Regarding Need IV, add numeric facts, and the word “to” in “.....become dire if nothing is done *to* create opportunity.”
- Add: Recognize importance of completion of trainings.
- Add: Increase availability of certification in programs available.
- Address: Businesses in rural Montana are drying up; these kinds of programs will meet and enhance business needs, and enhance and grow the sustainability of small towns.

##### Success and desired outcomes we envision:

- In the second to the last bullet, refer to both state and communities out-migration decreasing.
- Add a point about business partnerships being strengthened.
- Add another point about supporting other agencies' efforts of apprenticeships, to better utilize existing funding.

##### Suggestions for how the recommendation can be implemented:

- Talk about school-wide academic support in secondary schools.
- Add a point about two year college opportunities, their value and access to them.
- Add a point about charting a career path may involve a variety of career training approaches.

- Look at current and high demands in the future for workforce.
- Look into restoration of federal funds.
- We’re talking about WIRED, reshaping the workforce, an opportunity to find and develop talent with a business component. This is another added piece to make workforce development more complete.

### III. Provide financial literacy education.

#### A description of the rationale, need, importance and value:

- Add: Encourage and fund, for the general population, investor education and retirement education. With the decline of defined benefit plans we need education about retirement options and the importance of planning for retirement.

#### Suggestions for how the recommendations can be implemented:

- In the first sentence, replace “while providing” with “which provide.”
- In the third sentence, replace “home economics” with “family consumer science, career, and technical education courses.”

### IV. Provide access to high quality, affordable health insurance.

Minkie committed to sending Deb appendix information for this recommendation.

#### One sentence statement:

- Continue the first draft sentence with “... coverage, and regardless of pre-existing conditions.”

#### A description of the rationale, need, importance and value:

- Add: In many households, medical debt is a crippling experience.
- Add: Many people are falling through the cracks.
- Add: Insure Montana has run out of money.

#### Success and desired outcomes we envision:

- Third bullet, the required participation is by employees. Employers would be required to participate and employees are required to participate if they are not covered elsewhere, similar to car insurance.
- Fourth bullet, expand COBRA federally or with state insurance.
- Fifth bullet, mention the present level is very low.
- Sixth bullet, add “Increase and make adequate the funding for those unemployed or underemployed, and not on Medicaid, so that all have access to medical care.

#### Suggestions for how the recommendations can be implemented:

- Second point, the second sentence refers to “health *care* providers, insurance providers, government and clients in the discussion *to look at options*.”
- Fifth point: Replace “Assure health insurance coverage” with “Provide basic health services to... all children through school-based health programs – *hearing, sight, those things that impact a child’s ability to learn*.”
- Add: Increase eligibility for Medicaid.

### V. Insure all 19 year olds either graduate from high school or have the equivalent.

#### One sentence:

- Use the original goal (above), while naming that a real problem or crisis exists on Reservations. Either broaden this one to include all Montanans or address Native Americans in every goal.. The original recommendation was to cover all young people; we need to broaden it.

#### Three sentence statement:

- Take out the three uses of the word “mandatory,” make it a goal. Convey to students they don’t have the option to fail.

#### Suggestions for how the recommendations can be implemented:

- Add a component about birth to three year olds.
- Add point about pro-active work with the Hispanic community. Focus on Native Americans, but include all young people in recommendations for graduation.

## VI. Institute a state Earned Income Tax Credit

One sentence description of the proposal: Add the sentiment that this makes sense for tax fairness and helps the working poor develop working assets.

Three sentence description: On the third line, "...improve their economic condition and *have truly rewarding work*."

### Rationale:

- Make some of these ideas the implementation suggestions. Move them to that section.
- Add: The structure is already in place, thus there will be very low administrative overhead costs. It follows the federal one; it rewards work and does not penalize. It makes work pay.
- Add: Language about it being a refundable tax credit.
- Show the history of tax relief and the difference between tax refunds for business and low income people. A tax equity argument will be viewed favorably.
- People on Reservations are included, using a separate form.
- Are there any positive generalizations we can make from the 22 states that have implemented it? Include a map of the states that have implemented it in the appendix.

## VII. Develop family enrichment programs.

### Rationale, need, importance and value of the recommendation:

- Replace with and focus on facts, such as women make up 50% of the workforce, and Montana ranks 2<sup>nd</sup> in people who have two jobs.

### Success and desired outcomes we envision:

- Add a drug use reduction as an outcome or rationale.
- Emphasize higher graduation rates, lower drug use. These might be more effective than relationships.
- Regarding the second bullet, make sure this is all inclusive; make it more general with the use of "families" versus "parent-child and couple."
- Regarding boys and girls on Reservations, children would learn about traditional teachings with cultural activities such as drumming and beading. These keep kids in school, and decrease the drop-out rates.

### Suggestions for how the recommendation could be implemented:

- Number the bullets.
- Regarding the first one, add "Increase *enrichment* funding ...." and make it more specific about enrichment.
- Add: Increase and provide additional program funding

### b. Next action steps on our seven recommendations

- Deb and Shannon will write the final draft based on today's input, with a one week deadline. The whole document will be done in two weeks.
- An appendix will be attached with background information.
- Develop a plan for making sure the target audiences are aware of each program and initiative we suggest.

## **2. Our brainstorm about next steps and the future role of the Advisory Council**

### **a. What else do we want to do as a Council by the summer of 2008?**

- From our brainstorming about initiatives, look at the other suggestions (the ones beyond the top seven priorities). Look for legislative opportunities to garner support.
- Share this list of recommendations with other groups that meet who might support the initiatives.
- Create broad categories to promote, such as the cost of child care and access to health care. We made many excellent points that should not be lost.
- Continue to advise the Governor on topics that will enhance the lives of people with modest incomes.
- Draw support for the Predatory Lending ballot initiative, and inform the Governor about it.
- Encourage the Governor to encourage the congressional delegation to move away from the WIC budget item and improve it.
- Should we recommend to the Governor specific strategies and outreach activities to add voices to our recommendations?
- Take our show on the road; invite the public's input and feedback about our recommendations.
- Do public outreach.
- Set our own goals as a Council so we know we got certain things done. Measure economic security and poverty; establish baseline data and specific goals for change. Identify incremental steps to reach those goals. Example: Eliminate childhood poverty or focus on housing or childcare.

### **b. What process shall we use?**

- Use our seven recommendations as the start.
- Get input from businesses and the business community to make sure we aren't missing anything and grow their involvement.
- Put this package together and generate support for our recommendations in the Departments and with Legislators.
- Create work groups on specific topics that report back to the whole Council.
- Grow the public awareness of the recommendations to work with Departments. Write white papers and do the necessary research. Do public relations about the recommendations.
- Travel the state with our recommendations with the following format: 1. We meet by ourselves. 2. We invite public input with targeted invitees to demonstrate our concern about listening to people.
- Pull people from state agencies to include in our work groups.
- Generate more work groups on these subjects. Look at the statutory and assumed expectations of the Council on these same subjects. Make an addendum in our Executive Order to include these.
  - Measure and provide a scorecard for family economic security.
  - Carry out public education such as about IDAs, EITC, economic literacy education, etc.
  - LIEAP oversight responsibility.
  - Food and nutrition.
  - Child Support Enforcement.
  - Public Assistance, Food Stamps, child care, etc.
- WIC and Food Stamp recipients: look at ways to improve their lives.
- Coordinate existing programs.
- Pursue the implementation of hiring two FTE grant writers.
- Partner with existing Councils and groups to avoid missing priorities. Seek their support; avoid a perception of partisan viewpoints.
- Next time we meet, invite all the people who presented to us, and share our priorities with them.
- We haven't heard from people providing services in Montana, to learn from them what's going on locally, what working and what's not. A work group on research could do this.
- Provide a clearinghouse of information.

### **c. Work groups**

- Measure economic security; develop a scorecard.
- Public awareness agenda.
- Research.
- Coordinate public programs.
- Create resources.
- Don't lose the original brainstormed list of ideas.

### **3. Anna Whiting-Sorrell's feedback about our recommendations and suggestions for the future focus of the Advisory Council**

Anna will give our report to the Department Directors who have provided their reports and input to our process. It's up to them how our recommendations are incorporated into their work.

Look at successful models; learn from them how they leveraged federal funds, prevention funds, non-profit funds, and bring back those ideas. Stay very high level and help us build consensus. We need to know how they are doing this in communities.

This is an Advisory Council that provides the advise to the Governor. You are way ahead and can influence the Department Directors.

Minkie: We researched what works, the success and bring it back to the Governor. In three or four communities? Anna: It would be great if you went to Billings and discover their reality, and what creative ways they have put things together that could be translated to other communities in the state.

Shannon: Do we have the financial resources to visit communities? We are seeking successful models. Does that go outside our seven recommendations? Anna: These seven will go out to the Department Directors and influence them. What else is left in the order? Come up with creative ways to fund and implement and put in place new activities. This will be helpful as we put targets in place. You don't need public support of these recommendations; it is your role to give advise to the Governor. Now address: How does it come together to get it done? That's more important than the work that has occurred. For instance how have other states implemented creatively IDAs or financial literacy training? How can we partner and with whom to make these recommendations possible?

Minkie: When you have a chance to look at the report, would you keep us informed? Anna: We will draft directives, present them at a Cabinet meeting, and keep you informed of the proceedings. This is a very different process and budget. The Governor's Office is sending out directives versus a budget number as it has been historically. Minkie: We've tried to make our recommendations brief and succinct. If our key people could, we would appreciate the opportunity to clarify the details. Anna: If you want to have individual conversations with specific Directors, let's them then hear those ideas right now. Let's put those individual meetings with you together so you can explain what you've learned and recommend. Are there ways to think about using old money in new ways?

Anna: As these recommendations are given back to the Directors, they can massage and advance agendas for you. Minkie: This is very, very helpful. Sheila: You mentioned the Kellogg Foundation. Do they have specific desires? Anna: They are investing in a state and they care about these same issues. Shannon: Kellogg wants to invest up to \$80 million in a variety of ways. They visited here last year. Anna: The Governor can use his influence with entities like Kellogg; he is very willing. He's still waiting. Shannon asked him to host Kellogg and he did.

Anna: How can we influence federal funds? We need advice on how to get it done/ How we do is what we need from the Council.

### **4. The next Council meeting plans – February in Helena**

– Talk about holding the February meeting in a Native American community, and make plans to do so. Hold a community meeting there.

Ask: What works, what enhances economic security here? What are the gaps and needs?

Test our recommendations in a Reservation, rural, and other rural/urban, non-Helena communities.

Educate people about our role; provide the background on our purpose. Do preparations in those communities to make sure we are invited.

– Budget Office report on how our proposals are faring in the budget development process.

– Choose work groups and refine their role and purpose.

– At a future meeting, beyond the February one, invite Dr. Haynes to tell us about the study results.



## 5. Meeting evaluations summary

a. What was the *most* productive or helpful or interesting parts of the meeting?

- Presenting seven recommendations to the Council.
- I enjoyed reviewing the seven recommendations in the morning sessions.
- Anna and Hank’s presence to clarify Economic Council parameters.
- The feedback on each one of the recommendations.
- I was able to speak on behalf of Indians.
- Good meeting place.

b. What were the *least* productive or helpful or interesting parts of the meeting?

- The future work of the group after listening to Anna.
- Learning that our recommendations duplicate the already known and targeted areas of need.
- The session with Anna. I am not sure we have clear instructions / direction / guidance.
- Between lunch and Anna. (Our discussion about the future of the Council.)
- The discussions regarding what the Council should do next.

c. Did you *accomplish* what you wanted to accomplish? If so, what subjects or issues or topics were they?

- Yes.
- Discussion identifying the resources and the next steps.
- Two areas that will help our community in focusing on the high school graduation numbers, and job training and apprenticeships.
- Yes: Agreed on the seven recommendations. No: Still not clear picture of what we can do. We are not the Governor’s staff.
- Accomplished our Council’s goals, but learned Governor’s goal is how to fund.
- Yes – draft discussions.

d. What *changes and improvements* would you suggest for future meetings like this one?

- Having candid conversations and direction from the Governor’s Office.
- More of a circle of tables for the Council.
- Encourage absent members’ continued input and support.

e. What would you like to leave *exactly as it was today*? Keep these characteristics:

- The setting.
- The sheets on the wall.
- Time frame, location, lunch delivered, and morning coffee and refreshments great.
- The facility created greater opportunities for conversations and sharing.

f. Any *other* feedback, comments or suggestions you would care to make?

- I am disappointed in this process so far.
- Keep communications flowing.
- Anna’s work for the Advisory Council is very helpful.
- It would have been helpful to clarify that think, big dream big with an “out of the box” method of funding.